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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/698,087

10/31/2003

Robert S. Howland

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1016

34313 7590 04/19/2007

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EXAMINER

SWIGER III, JAMES L

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3733

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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3 MONTHS

04/19/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/698,087

Applicant(s)

HOWLAND, ROBERT S.

Examiner

James L. Swiger

Art Unit

3733

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 February 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 5-7 and 12-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 5-7 and 12-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 10/31/2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 5-7, 12, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Howland (U.S. Patent No. 5,649,926). Howland discloses a device having a first and second anchor assembly (Figs. 1 and 4), each having a threaded portion (52), each having a cylindrical swing bolt (50), each having a clamp assembly, a portion of which may be considered "C"-shaped (Fig. 1 and item 12) with a cylindrical opening for a rod (82) that is also a passage. Howland also discloses an elongate member that is partially curved (16), and that is also capable of use with the clamp assemblies (see Fig. 1). Howland further discloses clamp assemblies that have an upper and lower portion (see item 10 in Fig. 1), and a screw that has a spherical shoulder (26) that is capable of allowing the clamp portions to mate, pivot, and rotate with respect to each other in their use attaching vertebrae (Col. 1, lines 55-65). Howland further discloses a swing bolt that has a threaded region (22) opposite the respective first and second screws (in this case the portion screwed into the vertebrae) that allows these regions to be attached to the clamping assemblies in use.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

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The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Howland '926 in view of Fiz (US Patent 6,083,226). Howland discloses the claimed invention except for a spacer that fits along, and is substantially similar in length to, the elongate cable. Fiz discloses a bridge member (5) that is considered a spacer. This spacer element fits on an elongated member and aids in the arrangement of the spinal fixation system and would prevent the anchor assemblies from moving substantially towards one another. See also column 4, lines 55-67 and Col. 5, lines 1-15. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the fixation device of Howland having at least a spacer to prevent the anchor portion from moving substantially towards one another in view of Fiz in order to better arrange and use the spinal fixation device.

Allowable Subject Matter

The indicated allowability of claim 13 is withdrawn in view of the newly discovered reference(s) to Fiz '226. Rejections based on the newly cited reference(s) are detailed above.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 2/12/2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Regarding the claim amendments directed to the upper and lower

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clamps having a spherical seat the Howland reference has at least a spherical seat on the lower clamp portion (see Fig. 7, and wherein the bottom spherical portion is considered part of the whole bottom portion, and also wherein portion 26 is considered a spherical portion as part of the swing bolt portion. When attached the two portions mate with one another. Since the bolt can rotate about the longitudinal axis of the bolt, and also about the axis 28, it would be able to obtain 360 degrees of rotation.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. See PTO-892.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James L. Swiger whose telephone number is 571-272-5557. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on 571-272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

 1/14/07

JLS


EDUARDO C. ROBERT
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER